**36th Session of the UPR Working Group**

**Statement on the Review of Panama**

3 November 2020 at 14:30

**Mr./Mme. (Vice) President,**

We welcome the distinguished delegation of the Republic of Panama and express our appreciation for their engagement with the UPR during these challenging times.

In particular, Afghanistan welcomes the establishment of a national preventive mechanism,and the entry into force of Decree No. 613 of October 2018, allowing for asylum on humanitarian grounds.Afghanistan commends Panama for its development the National Strategic Plan and State Vision “Panamá 2030”

**Mr. /Mme. (Vice) President,**

While we acknowledge the above achievements, we remain concerned about the slow progress in education coverage; and the high percentage of asylum claims declared inadmissible.

 In the spirit of constructive engagement, we wish to make the following recommendations:

1- Strengthen efforts to increase coverage and quality of educational services at all levels through raising the education budget and strengthening a non-discrimination framework,

2- Ensure that access to the territory of Panama and asylum procedures conform to international standards, prevent cases of refoulement, and strengthen asylum capacity and legal assistance to asylum seekers.

Finally, Afghanistan encourages Panama to continue to promote and protect human rights in the context of COVID-19 and wishes Panama every success in the UPR review process.

**I thank you, Mr. /Mme. (Vice) President.**